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ABSTRACT

Prepared by the Classroom Feedback Subcommittee of the Teaching/Learning Project, this report offers recommendations on "the sharing of constructive information between students and faculty relative to each other's performance through a process by which faculty learn about their teaching and students learn about their learning." After presenting this definition of classroom feedback, the report explains that the purpose of classroom feedback is to develop a variety of methods and data sources so that faculty can assess the immediate effectiveness of their teaching, guide their teaching, gain a long-term view of student performance, and provide evidence of successful teaching. After discussing the assumptions that guided the work of the committee, the report presents the following recommendations; (1) a Teaching/Learning Resource Center should be designated on each campus to provide resources for faculty who wish to implement classroom feedback; (2) time should be set aside to enable faculty to broaden their knowledge about the use of classroom feedback; (3) a modular format should be developed for a classroom feedback graduate course to provide independent learning opportunities for course segments; (4) budgetary commitments should be made to provide the time and financial support necessary for faculty to conduct classroom feedback projects; (5) opportunities should be provided for faculty to develop or reinforce their skills in conducting summative evaluations; (6) an improved Information Flow System should be devised to provide information about the progress students have made in the institution; and (7) efforts should continue to identify a variety of effective techniques to provide feedback to students about their learning. The original subcommittee report is attached. (JMC)

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RECOMMENDATIONS ON CLASSROOM FEEDBACK

(Adopted by the President's Council on February 21, 1989 and June 27, 1989. Includes the find report of the Classroom Feedback Subcommittee of the Teaching/Learning Project.)

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BACKGROUND

The Subcommittee developed the following working definition of classroom feedback:

> Classroom feedback is the sharing of constructive information between students and faculty relative to each other's performance through a process by which faculty learn about their teaching and students learn about their learning.

The purpose of classroom feedback is to develop a variety of methods and data sources that faculty can use to:

1. Assess the immediate effectiveness of their teaching.
2. Guide their teaching.
3. Gain a long-term view of student performance.
4. Provide evidence of successful teaching.

To guide the work of the Subcommittee, members identified the following set of assumptions:

Assumption 1:	Faculty are professionals who possess integrity and desire excellence.
Assumption 2:	Faculty should be in control of the feedback process.
Assumption 3:	The successful implementation of ongoing and effective classroom feedback will be dependent upon collegiality and support among the faculty.
Assumption 4:	Classroom feedback will provide formative information to faculty for the purpose of increasing student learning.

The decision to use the terminology "classroom feedback" rather than "classroom research," was made after lengthy discussions about the meaning of several words. Webster's New World Dictionary defines the following:

Research:	Careful, systematic, patient study and investigation in some field of knowledge, undertaken to discover or establish facts or principles.
Feedback:	A process in which the factors that produce a result are themselves modified, corrected, strengthened, etc. by that result.
Assessment:	The act of estimating or determining the significance, value, or importance of "X"; an evaluation.

Subcommittee members agreed that "feedback" is intended to improve (modify, correct, strengthen) teaching and learning and is the more relevant term for those whose primary interest is classroom teaching. Research is, perhaps, more systematic and difficult; however, it is hoped that faculty will conduct research in addition to the simpler forms of assessment and classroom feedback.

Although the work of this subcommittee focused on ways of gathering information which can be used to improve teaching, classroom feedback is only one part of the teaching/learning process. The Subcommittee

recognized that its recommendations will be meshed with those of the Learning to Learn Subcommittee to present a broader perspective on teaching and learning.

As noted in the definition, classroom feedback is a two-way process which takes place between student and faculty member. Therefore, student involvement in the process is imperative. Students must have the opportunity to actively present information about their learning and about perceptions of classroom teaching. This will permit the faculty to develop an awareness of what is occurring prior to the time for summative evaluation. Faculty must have the opportunity to actively receive information about their teaching and the opportunity to maximize their effectiveness. It is assumed that faculty have definite course goals and objectives which they share with students. Any effective assessment, feedback, or evaluative process depends upon clearly stated goals and objectives. Subcommittee members agreed that any one piece of information, in isolation, is inadequate to make a statement about the performance of students or faculty and that a variety of data strengthens assessment and evaluation.

The value of a supportive environment for teaching/learning and classroom feedback must be stressed. Faculty, chairpersons, staff, and administrators share responsibility for providing that environment within the classroom.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: A Teaching/Learning Resource Center should be designated on each campus to provide resources for faculty who wish to implement classroom feedback.

Each campus should have a Resource Center to assist faculty with classroom research or feedback. This center should be staffed by a full-time individual with expertise in education and classroom research. This person would help faculty develop and implement classroom feedback, analyze the results, and develop strategies for responding to the feedback. The Resource Center would consist of an area for open discussion among all faculty regarding classroom feedback, a quiet area for reading reference materials, and a media resource area where faculty could access techniques or analyze data via computer terminals and view feedback techniques recorded on videotape. As an extension of the graduate course on classroom feedback, the Resource Center would act as a centralized storage area for feedback techniques. Ultimately, it would provide an environment conducive to interaction among faculty regarding all aspects of the teaching/learning process.

Recommendation 2: Time should be set aside to enable faculty to broaden their knowledge about the use of classroom feedback.

Faculty should be permitted worktime without student contact commitments to participate in activities such as intra- and inter-campus workshops or meetings. Funding for substitutes should be made available to faculty wishing to actively participate. Annual classroom feedback workshops, modeled after the Master Teacher Seminars, should be implemented for

Miami-Dade faculty and facilitated by other Miami-Dade faculty who are (or would be) trained as workshop leaders. These seminars, additionally, should be opened to faculty from other institutions.

Recommendation 3: Course Modules -- The graduate course EPS 595: Research in the Classroom should be developed in a modular format to provide independent learning opportunities for course segments.

A modular format should be developed for the classroom feedback graduate course. The total course content can be divided into separate units which lend themselves to independent learning. Each module would contain objectives, learning activities and strategies, and methods of evaluation. Modules would permit the implementation of parts of the course to meet departmental needs and would allow faculty to take advantage of topical workshops or independent learning opportunities.

Recommendation 4: Budgetary commitments should be made to provide the time and financial support necessary for faculty to conduct classroom feedback projects.

Demonstration of the College's financial support for classroom feedback is essential if faculty are to be able to develop and incorporate this new knowledge into their teaching. Faculty conducting feedback will require release time, small classes, or reduced teaching load. Financial support will also be required for the development of Resource Centers, modules, information flow systems, faculty development activities, and conference travel. The writing of grants is encouraged to provide some of this support; however, the College should provide relief in teaching load to those faculty in high stress areas or where workload is unusually heavy and to those who desire to develop or implement special projects in classroom feedback.

Recommendation 5: Opportunities should be provided for faculty to develop or reinforce their skills in conducting summative evaluations.

To assure that valid and reliable information about students' learning is provided, faculty must have the skills required to develop and interpret teacher-made tests. Opportunities to develop or reinforce those skills should be an ongoing part of faculty development.

Recommendation 6: An improved Information Flow System should be devised to provide information about the progress students have made in the institution.

Summative evaluation also provides information about the institution's ability to demonstrate its value for learning. This subcommittee recommends the development of an improved Information Flow System which will provide faculty with a variety of options regarding information pertaining to individual students or to class groups. Knowledge about learning styles and educational goals are examples of information which might help the faculty enhance their teaching. The success that a student has in subsequent courses, in upper division, or on standardized tests

will provide faculty with information regarding the success of the educational program.

Recommendation 7: Efforts should continue to identify a variety of effective techniques to provide feedback to students about their learning.

Feedback is also a sharing of constructive information from faculty to students. Within the overall teaching/learning process, faculty use verbal interactions, written comments, and computer assisted data to provide information to students about their learning. Continued work is recommended to determine the most effective ways of providing this information.

FINAL REPORT OF THE
CLASSROOM FEEDBACK
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE TEACHING/LEARNING PROJECT

CLASSROOM FEEDBACK SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE TEACHING/LEARNING PROJECT

RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The Classroom Feedback Subcommittee was formed in September, 1987. During the first semester of operation, Dr. K. Patricia Cross worked actively with the committee. To begin its work, the committee developed a definition of Classroom Feedback.

> Classroom feedback is the sharing of constructive information between students and faculty relative to each other's performance through a process by which faculty learn about their teaching and students learn about their learning.

Although the work of this committee focused on ways of gathering information which can be used to improve the teaching process, classroom feedback is only one part of the teaching/learning process. The committee recognizes that its recommendations will be meshed with those of the Learning to Learn Subcommittee to present a broader perspective on teaching and learning. As noted in the definition of classroom feedback, feedback is a two-way process which takes place between the student and faculty member. Therefore, student involvement in the process is imperative. Students must have the opportunity to actively present information about their learning and about perceptions of classroom teaching. This will permit the faculty to develop an awareness of what is occurring prior to the time for summative evaluation. Faculty must have the opportunity to actively receive information about their teaching and the opportunity to maximize their effectiveness. Committee members agree that any one piece of information, in isolation, is inadequate to make a statement about the performance of students or faculty and that a variety of data strengthens assessment and evaluation.

The committee agreed that the purpose of classroom feedback is to develop a variety of methods and data sources that faculty can use to:

1. Assess the immediate effectiveness of their teaching
2. Guide their teaching
3. Gain a long-term view of student performance
4. Provide evidence of successful teaching

To guide the work of the committee, members identified the following set of assumptions:

Assumption 1: The faculty are professionals who possess integrity and desire excellence.

Assumption 2: The faculty should be in control of the feedback process.

Assumption 3: The successful implementation of on-going and effective classroom feedback will be dependent upon collegiality and support among the faculty.

Assumption 4: Classroom feedback will provide formative information to faculty for the purpose of increasing student learning.

The decision to use the terminology "classroom feedback" rather than "classroom research", was made after lengthy discussions about the meaning of several words. Webster's New World Dictionary defines the following:

Research — careful, systematic, patient study and investigation in some field of knowledge, undertaken to discover or establish facts or principles.

Feedback — a process in which the factors that produce a result are themselves modified, corrected, strengthened, etc. by that result.

Assessment — the act of estimating or determining the significance, value or importance of "X"; and evaluation.

Members agree that "feedback" is intended to improve (modify, correct, strengthen) teaching and learning and is the more relevant term for those whose primary interest is classroom teaching. Research is, perhaps, more systematic and difficult; however, members hope that faculty will conduct research in addition to the simpler forms of assessment and Classroom Feedback.

Finally, members stress the value of a supportive environment for teaching/learning and classroom feedback. Faculty, chairpersons and administrators share responsibility for providing that environment within the classroom. It is assumed that faculty have definite course goals and objectives which they share with students. Any effective assessment, feedback, or evaluative process depends upon clearly stated goals and objectives.

Recommendation 1: Learning Resources Center
Objective: To provide resources for the faculty who wish to implement classroom feedback.

Each campus should have a Resource Center to assist faculty with classroom research or feedback. This center would be staffed by a full-time individual with expertise in education and classroom research. This person would help faculty to develop and implement classroom feedback, analyze the results, and develop strategies for responding to the feedback. The Resource Center would consist of an area for open discussion among all faculty regarding classroom feedback, a quiet area for reading reference materials, and a media resource area where faculty could access techniques or analyze data via computer terminals and view feedback techniques recorded on videotape. As an extension of the course on classroom feedback, the Resource Center would act as a centralized storage area for feedback techniques. Ultimately, it would incorporate all teaching/learning functions and would provide an environment conducive for interaction among faculty regarding the teaching/learning process.

Recommendation 2: Faculty Development
Objective: To broaden the faculty's knowledge about the use of classroom feedback.

Within the college calendar three Faculty Development Days per each major semester should be planned. Classes should be configured to permit these scheduled workdays without student contact commitments. During these days activities would include intra and inter campus workshops, departmental meetings and interactions within disciplines. On campus sites and off campus retreats could be used. Faculty would be required to participate in the development programs which would be designed to enhance feedback techniques and other teaching/learning skills. Annual workshops, modeled after the Master Teacher Seminars, should be implemented for Miami-Dade faculty and facilitated by other Miami-Dade faculty who are trained as workshop leaders. These seminars should be opened to faculty in other institutions.

Recommendation 3: Course Modules
Objective: To enable the segmental implementation of the course Analysis and Appraisal of Learning Processes in Higher Education. To offer independent learning opportunities for course segments.

A modular format should be developed for the classroom feedback course. The total course content can be divided into separate units which lend themselves to independent learning. Each module would contain objectives, learning activities and strategies, and methods of evaluation. Modules would permit the implementation of parts of the course to meet departmental workshop needs and would allow faculty to take advantage of independent learning opportunities.

Recommendation 4: Budgetary Commitment
Objective: To provide the time and financial support necessary for faculty to conduct classroom feedback projects.

Demonstration of college's financial support for classroom feedback is essential if faculty are to be able to develop and incorporate this new knowledge into their teaching. Faculty conducting feedback will require release time, small classes, or reduced teaching load. Financial support will also be required for the development of resource centers, modules, and information flow systems; faculty development days and workshops; and conference travel. The writing of grants is encouraged to provide some of this support; however, the college should provide relief in teaching load to those faculty teaching in areas high in stress or workload and to those who desire to develop or implement special projects in classroom feedback.

Recommendation 5: Summative Evaluation
Objective: To provide information about the progress a student has made in a particular course.

To assure valid and reliable information about students' learning, faculty must have the skills required to develop and interpret teacher-made tests. Opportunities to develop or reinforce those skills should be an on-going part of faculty development.

Recommendation 6: Information Flow Systems
Objective: To provide information about the progress students have made in the institutions.

Summative evaluation also provides information about the institution's ability to demonstrate its value for learning. This committee recommends the development of an improved Information Flow System which provides faculty with a variety of options regarding information pertaining to individual students or to class groups. Knowledge about learning styles and educational goals are examples of information which might help the faculty enhance their teaching. The success that a student has in subsequent courses, in upper division, or on standardized tests will provide faculty with information regarding the success of the educational program.

Recommendation 7: Feedback to Students
Objective: To determine effective feedback techniques for faculty to provide information to students about their learning.

Feedback is also a sharing of constructive information from faculty to students. Within the overall teaching/learning process faculty use verbal interactions, written comments, and computer assisted data to provide information to students about their learning. Continued work is recommended to determine the most effective ways of providing this information.

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